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Jno F. Slater

MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN F. SLATER,

OF NORWICH, CONNECTICUT.

1815–1884.

NORWICH, CONN.
1885.

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CONTENTS.

I.

PAGE

Biographical Sketch prepared for the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund, by Daniel C. Gilman, Secretary of the Board 5

II.

Address at the Funeral, May 10, 1884, by the Rev. S. H. Howe, D.D. 15

III.

Letter of Mr. Slater giving a Fund for the Education of the Freedmen 23

IV.

Charter from the State of New York, incorporating the John F. Slater Trustees 27

V.

Action of the Congress of the United States in Acknowledgment of Mr. Slater's Generosity 29

VI.

Remarks of President Hayes, at a Meeting of the Slater Trustees 31

I.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE JOHN F. SLATER TRUSTEES BY THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

JOHN FOX SLATER, of Norwich, Conn., who gave a fund to promote the education of the freedmen, was a quiet, thoughtful, well-trained man of business, who rose by industry, sagacity, and prudence to the possession of a fortune. His chief occupation through life was the manufacturing of cotton and woollen goods in Connecticut and Rhode Island. In recent years, as his means increased, he was interested in many enterprises in the neighborhood of his home as well as at a distance. He was a close observer of the social, political, and religious progress of the country, and a frequent, unostentatious contributor to benevolent undertakings, especially such as were brought to his attention in the town where he resided and in the church which he attended. From all positions which made him conspicuous he was inclined to withdraw himself; but whenever he did participate in public affairs he showed the same independence, sagacity, and resolution which marked the conduct of his business. Under these circumstances the story of his life is simply that of a private citizen who was faithful to the responsibilities which devolved upon him, and who gradually acquired the means to contribute liberally toward the welfare of others.

For three generations the Slater family has been engaged, either in England or the United States, in the improvement of cotton manufactures. Their English home was at Belper, Derbyshire, where William Slater, a man of considerable property, the grandfather of John F. Slater, resided more than a hundred years ago, until his death in 1782. At Belper and at Milford, not far from Belper, Jedediah Strutt was engaged as a partner of Sir Richard Arkwright in the business of cotton-spinning, then just becoming one of the great branches of industry in England.

Samuel Slater, fifth son of William Slater, was apprenticed to Mr. Strutt, and near the close of his service was for some years general overseer of the mill at Milford. Having completed his engagement he came to this country in 1789, and brought with him such an accurate knowledge of the business of cotton-spinning, that without any written or printed descriptions, without diagrams or models, he was able to introduce the entire series of machines and processes of the Arkwright cotton manufacture in as perfect a form as it then existed in England. He soon came into relations with Moses Brown, of Providence, and through him with his son-in-law and his kinsman, William Almy and Smith Brown. With the persons last named he formed the partnership of Almy, Brown, & Slater. For this firm, Samuel Slater devised machinery and established a mill for the manufacture of cotton, at Pawtucket, R. I., in the year 1790; but as this proved an inadequate enterprise, he constructed a larger mill at the same place in 1793.

A few years later, about 1804, at the invitation of his brother Samuel, John Slater, a younger son of William, came from England and joined his brother in Rhode Island. The village of Slatersville, on a branch of the river Blackstone, was projected in 1806, and here until the present time the Slaters have continued the manufacture of cotton goods.

John F. Slater, son of John and nephew of Samuel, was born in the village just named, in the town of Smithfield, R. I., March 4, 1815, and received a good education in the academies of Plainfield in Connecticut, and of Wrentham and Wilbra-

ham in Massachusetts. At the age of seventeen (in connection with Samuel Collier) he began to manage his father's woollen mill at Hopeville, in Griswold, Conn., and there he remained until he became of age. In 1836 he took full charge of this factory, and also of a cotton mill at Jewett City, another village of the same town, where he made his home. Six years later he removed to Norwich, with which Jewett City was then connected by railway. Here he married, May 13, 1844, a daughter of Amos H. Hubbard, and here his six children were born. Only two of them, the eldest and the youngest, a daughter and a son, survived the period of infancy, and of these the son alone is living. Norwich continued to be Mr. Slater's home until he died there, at the beginning of his seventieth year, May 7, 1884.

Before his last great gift, Mr. Slater made generous contributions to religious and educational enterprises. He was one of the original corporators of the Norwich Free Academy, to which he gave at different times more than fifteen thousand dollars. To the construction of the Park Congregational Church, which he attended, he gave the sum of thirty-three thousand dollars, and subsequently a fund of ten thousand dollars, the income of which is to keep the edifice in repair. At the time of his death he was engaged in building a Public Library in Jewett City, which has since been completed at a cost of sixteen thousand dollars. His private benefactions and his contributions to benevolent societies were also numerous. During the war his sympathies were heartily with the Union, and he was a large purchaser of the government bonds when others doubted their security.

Some years before his death Mr. Slater formed the purpose of devoting a large sum of money to the education of the freedmen. It is believed that this humane project occurred to him, without suggestion from any other mind, in view of the apprehensions which all thoughtful persons felt, when after the war the duties of citizenship were suddenly imposed upon millions of emancipated slaves. Certainly, when he began to speak freely of his intentions, he had decided upon

the amount of his gift and its scope. These were not open questions. He knew exactly what he wished to do. It was not to bestow charity upon the destitute, nor to encourage a few exceptional individuals; it was not to build churches, school-houses, asylums, or colleges; it was not to establish one strong institution as a personal monument; it was, on the other hand, to help the people of the South in solving the great problem which had been forced upon them, — how to train, in various places and under differing circumstances, those who have long been dependent, for the duties belonging to them now that they are free. This purpose was fixed. In respect to the best mode of organizing a trust, Mr. Slater sought counsel of many experienced persons, — of the managers of the Peabody Educational Fund, in regard to their work; of lawyers and those who had been in official life, with respect to questions of law and legislation; of ministers, teachers, and others who had been familiar with charitable and educational trusts, or who were particularly well informed in respect to the condition of the freedmen at the South. The results of all these consultations, which were continued during a period of several years, were at length reduced to a satisfactory form, and were embodied in a charter granted to a Board of Trustees by the State of New York in the spring of 1882, and in a carefully thought out and carefully written letter, addressed to those who were selected to administer the trust.

The characteristics of this gift were its Christian spirit, its patriotism, and its freedom from all secondary purposes or hampering conditions. In broad and general terms the donor indicated the object which he had in view; the details of management he left to others, confident that their collective wisdom and the experience they must acquire would devise better modes of procedure, as the years go on, than any individual could propose in advance.

The words which Mr. Slater employed to express his aim were these: —

"The general object which I desire to have exclusively pursued, is the uplifting of the lately emancipated population

of the Southern States, and their posterity, by conferring on them the blessings of Christian education. The disabilities formerly suffered by these people, and their singular patience and fidelity in the great crisis of the nation, establish a just claim on the sympathy and good will of humane and patriotic men. I cannot but feel the compassion that is due in view of their prevailing ignorance, which exists by no fault of their own.

"But it is not only for their own sake, but also for the safety of our common country, in which they have been invested with equal political rights, that I am desirous to aid in providing them with the means of such education as shall tend to make them good men and good citizens, — education in which the instruction of the mind in the common branches of secular learning shall be associated with training in just notions of duty toward God and man, in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

"The means to be used in the prosecution of the general object above described I leave to the discretion of the corporation; only indicating, as lines of operation adapted to the present condition of things, the training of teachers from among the people requiring to be taught, if, in the opinion of the corporation, by such limited selection the purposes of the trust can be best accomplished; and the encouragement of such institutions as are most effectually useful in promoting this training of teachers.

"I am well aware that the work herein proposed is nothing new or untried. And it is no small part of my satisfaction in taking this share in it, that I hereby associate myself with some of the noblest enterprises of charity and humanity, and may hope to encourage the prayers and toils of faithful men and women who have labored and are still laboring in this cause."

On the eighteenth of May, 1882, Mr. Slater met the Board of Trustees in the city of New York and transferred to them the sum of one million dollars, a little more than half of it being already invested, and the remainder being cash to be invested at the discretion of the Board.

The Board, after completing their organization, addressed to the founder the following letter, which was signed by every member: —

NEW YORK, May 18, 1882.

To JOHN F. SLATER, Esq., Norwich, Conn.

The members of the Board of Trustees whom you invited to take charge of the Fund which you have devoted to the education of the lately emancipated people of the Southern States and their posterity, desire at the beginning of their work to place on record their appreciation of your purpose, and to congratulate you on having completed this wise and generous gift at a period of your life when you may hope to observe for many years its beneficent influence.

They wish especially to assure you of their gratification in being called upon to administer a work so noble and timely. If this trust is successfully managed, it may, like the gift of George Peabody, lead to many other benefactions. As it tends to remove the ignorance of large numbers of those who have a vote in public affairs, it will promote the welfare of every part of our country, and your generous action will receive, as it deserves, the thanks of good men and women in this and other lands.

Your Trustees unite in wishing you long life and health, that you may have the satisfaction of seeing the result of your patriotic forecast.

Since that time the Trustees have met frequently and made appropriations in accordance with the founder's wishes. As a General Agent, they made choice of the Rev. A. G. Haygood, D.D., of Oxford, Ga., who is now giving all his time to this work.

There are two persons, the pastor and the son of Mr. Slater, whose words may here be appropriately added. The former gave his impressions of his parishioner in a funeral discourse; the latter, in reply to a request for information in regard to his father's business, has taken the pains to collect some interesting and suggestive facts which illustrate the methods by which he attained financial success. These two delineations, from different points of view, will supplement each other, and will give a just idea of the founder of this great trust.

Note on Mr. Slater's Career as a Manufacturer.

Mr. William A. Slater, aided by his father's friend and neighbor, Mr. Moses Pierce, of Norwich, has collected the following data: —

On the death of John Slater, May 27, 1843, his sons John F. and William S. inherited his interest in the mills at Hopeville and Jewett City, Conn., and at Slatersville, R. I., and they formed a partnership under the name of J. & W. Slater, adjusting their affairs so as to be equal partners. In March, 1845, this firm sold their Hopeville property, and in 1849 bought the interest of Samuel Slater's heirs in the mill at Slatersville. In 1853, after the lease of this last-mentioned property to A. D. and M. B. Lockwood had expired, William S. Slater took the management of the Slatersville mill, and John F. Slater that of the Jewett City mill. The partnership of the brothers continued until Jan. 1, 1873, when it was dissolved, each taking the mill of which he had been the manager.

When John F. Slater became responsible for the mill at Jewett City, there were ninety looms in it; there are now four hundred and forty-nine. As many yards of cloth are now made in five weeks as were then made in twelve months. During more than forty years in which Mr. Slater operated this mill, he maintained uninterruptedly the good-will of those whom he employed. He studied their welfare, and by so doing retained them in his service. Probably it cannot be said of another mill in the country, as it can be of the Jewett City mill, that every one of seven overseers in different departments of the business has been in the service of the same employer for at least seventeen years, and four of them for periods varying from thirty to forty-eight years. The book-keeper has been in his position forty-seven years; and the superintendent has been in the service of grandfather, father, and son, thirty years in all. Eight of the persons thus referred to were bearers at the funeral of Mr. Slater.

It was always my father's policy in the manipulation of his mill to keep a piece of machinery as long as it could do its work satisfactorily (by careful management), even if it did not in appearance compare favorably with that in other mills. He did not believe in continually trying experiments, but preferred waiting till a new thing had been proved to be a success before using it. When this was proved, no one was more ready to adopt it. This, with a like policy in other particulars, is, I believe, one of the chief reasons of his financial success as a manufacturer.

He was an excellent judge of character in men, and especially of their ability and knowledge; and thus in later days his manufacturing business was so organized, under capable persons, that he could give much of his time to other affairs, while he still kept the reins in his hands.

It was always my father's effort to run the mill as many days in the year as possible, and in hard times or in war times to keep running to the last moment. Thus, during the war he continued to run his mill some time after most of the mills in the neighborhood had stopped, and in fact till cotton went up to sixty-seven cents per pound, never fearing that the Union forces would not be victorious. When business was dull and all seemed blue, it was still his desire to run as long as possible, because of his dread of throwing his employees out of work. He was one of the first in his neighborhood to insist on the shortening of the hours of labor by one hour per day, when this subject was agitated some ten or twelve years ago.

Many people suppose that he was left a large fortune by his father. This is, however, not true. He may have had fifty thousand dollars from this source. The foundation and a large part of the fortune which he accumulated were the results of his management of his mills.

Ponemah Mills. — Mr. Edward P. Taft, in conjunction with Mr. Cyrus Taft, began the construction of a large mill at Taftville, near Norwich, Conn., in 1865. When the second story was nearly completed they became embarrassed, and in this condition the building stood for several years. In July, 1869, my father, his brother William, Earl P. Mason, Anthony & Hall, of New York, Moses Pierce, and others, met in Providence for the purpose of uniting in an effort to get subscriptions to complete and operate the mill. Mr. Mason put down his name first for one hundred thousand dollars; my father followed with a like amount, as did William S. Slater and Anthony & Hall. Other subscriptions were then obtained, till nearly all of the requisite million and a half dollars was subscribed.

The mill was completed, and the first picker started in November, 1871, under the name of "Orray Taft Manufacturing Company." The mill was named Ponemah in 1871. My father was one of the executive committee with Moses Pierce and Lorenzo Blackstone, and was also president of the company from its organization until his death. He took a deep interest in this enterprise, and gave it a great deal of personal attention, visiting the mill, when at home, about once a week. I think I may justly say that a material part of its success has been due to his counsel and prudence.

He was interested in a great variety of enterprises, manufacturing, railroad, and miscellaneous. He was not a speculator, and I think I

may confidently say never bought, even in his earlier days, a share of stock on a margin. In his later days, when his credit was almost limitless, it was never his custom to buy, and so far as I am informed he never did buy, stocks with money advanced on his credit, but always waited till he had the money accumulated and waiting investment. Of course he sometimes made mistakes and lost large sums, but he bore these losses with equanimity. Generally, however, he was fortunate in his investments, especially when they were of such a kind as to allow of his personal investigation.

Of late years his interests in railroads were greater than in manufactures; and though living quietly, away from the centres of trade and finance, he kept himself conversant with the great railroads of the country, and was an authority on the subject in his neighborhood, as the number of calls and letters he received asking information would testify. With all his different interests he was perfectly familiar, carrying accounts in his head so that if necessary he could correct the double-entry books in which the record of his transactions was kept. He had no office away from his house, but did all his business at home, with an ease which gave no impression of the magnitude of his concerns.

II.

ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL,

NORWICH, MAY 10, 1884,

BY THE REV. S. H. HOWE, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

WE are face to face at this moment with a fact, which is old and always new, of which we are perpetually warned, and for which we are never ready, — the fact of our mortality. This is the end of all men. There is one event unto all. It is appointed unto all men once to die. Death hath reigned from Adam unto Moses, and from Moses unto the present hour. Here we have no continuing city. Broad as we may make the foundations of our life, the structure cannot always stand. There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war. The mandate of death is inexorable, and there is no appeal from that fiat. And so the oldest and so the newest and latest generations of the world have found as they have come and gone, like the waves of ocean that break upon the shore.

And yet, while asserting and accepting that fact, I am here to say that there is no impotence like the impotence of death. There are human lives over which death hath no power. There are names which, neither eclipsing nor dimming, death sets in a fresh transfiguration light. Such names cease to be taken upon our lips in the familiarity of personal greetings.

Such men disappear in outward form from our streets, but they have become a corporate part of our life: their influence stays behind; their memories are an inspiration to other men striving for earthly success; while a few of this class find permanent niches in the history of the beneficent work of the world.

The projectors and executors of wise plans; the organizers of schemes for the bettering of the race; the men especially who reach down to the bottom of the social fabric, and work hand in hand with the great God in levelling up the race from beneath, — are men over whom death impotently asserts his power. They pass from sight, disappear from the eye. Yes; but they walk the earth with a more commanding presence, and wield the spell of a wider influence. You would not say the men who have served the race and left on foot influences which have become incorporate with the best life of the world, — you would not say these men are dead. They have ceased to be seen as visible personalities, but they have become immortal in the world as quickening influences. Howard still visits the prisoner. Wilberforce still breaks the fetters of the slave. Peabody and Cooper still place the foundations of knowledge within reach of the poor. Their lives, their gifts, are being reduplicated, as they spread by contagion the spirit of philanthropy among men; they pass for a sort of fresh incarnation into the minds and hearts of living men who catch their spirit and go to spread it, and give it fresh forms and new embodiments. Over such we say, and truly, death hath no power.

We come to-day to pay our tribute of respect and affection to such a man, whom the grave will not hold or hide from view.

While leaving to other voices and other pens the ampler delineation of character and the utterance of worthy eulogy, we come as his friends, his fellow-citizens, his fellow-worshippers, to give voice to our private grief and our sense of public loss, which we regard as scarcely less than a public calamity.

We come to bear to his burial a man who has filled a large and unique place in our community; who, as few men are able to do, gathered to himself the respect, admiration, and affection of his fellow-men. Most men pass from the circles of private friendship bearing with them the affection of the few; other lives overflow the circumference of neighborhood circles, and touch with their larger personality the life of the whole community, and in some cases stir an interest in the greater public of the nation and the world.

I need not say in this place and in this presence that there disappears from among us such a man; that we lose from the circles of private friendship and from the streets of our city a strong magnetic personality, a man of fine fibre and of genuine manliness, — a gentleman by instinct and by training and by habit, who, though reserved and self-respecting, extended to men of every station a rare and gracious courtesy, and to those who stood nearest him a friendship so generous, so genuine, that there falls upon those who shared it a sense of irreparable and enduring loss.

We come to do honor to a successful business man, a financier of rare ability and sagacity, of profound insight and exhaustive knowledge of affairs and of men; with brain and force and training to have wisely controlled the financial interests of a nation; whose judgment and counsel were sought by great corporations in the management of enterprises and industries which represented large investments and vast outlay of capital; who for himself, in an age when millions are struggling for the great prizes and trampling each other down in the battle and the race, amassed private fortune by honorable methods, upon which he was not afraid for the eye of God to rest. So honestly achieved were his gains, we believe that no dollar of his achievings lay as a weight upon his conscience when he was dying.

His sagacity in business, which amounted to genius; his unflawed integrity; his keen sense of honor, from which the

petty temptations and tricks of business would have slunk away and hidden; his thorough manliness; his nobleness of bearing among his fellows; his absolute freedom from hauteur and ostentation, — set him before the young men of his generation who would win for themselves honorable success, as an inspiring model and example.

To us, his friends and neighbors, who knew him as the possessor of these rare qualities of character, he is held in esteem and will be remembered; but to others, the larger public, he is known and will be remembered in association with the princely gift of philanthropy which has carried his name and the name of our beautiful city round the globe, — a benefaction which gives him place in the front rank of the noble galaxy of modern philanthropists whose names will be fixed stars in the world's best history.

The philanthropists, it has been truly said, are "the real fellow-workers with the most high God," as it does truly seem that the men who lay out their lives in philanthropic toil, the men who give princely fortunes to pure benevolence, work likest unto God himself.

The gift of Mr. Slater was one of striking originality and uniqueness. Originating without suggestion from others, wholly with himself, and elaborated to its minutest detail in his own thought, he chose to make his offering, not to conspicuous institutions whose name or whose work should hold the giver perpetually in the public eye, but, crossing the whole diameter of society, he carried it to the lowest groove in our social and national life, to the poorest of this nation's poor, and set it to work in spreading intelligence and building character in the present and oncoming generation of a lowly race. With the sagacity of wise statesmanship and the fervor of purest patriotism and the spirit of the Christian, he went to the lowest place and to the weakest spot in our national fabric to strengthen it; to put a rock bottom underneath the foundation of the nation he loved and we all love so well.

He did one of the things which the Christ, were He to come again, would commission his servants unto whom God has pleased to grant prosperity in business to do, a work whose far-reaching influences on the life of the nation no eye can yet foresee. We have done full honor to the brave men who were the inaugurators of the movement which cut the fetters of the slave, and to the brave armies which fought the desperate battle to its successful issue. We to-day, and we shall more fully in the future, do honor to a man who with others have taken up the more difficult work of rehabilitating the emancipated slave, clothing him with the intelligence and the manhood which qualify him for citizenship. It is a noble thing to break a slave's fetters, but it is equally noble to help the slave to manhood, and give his race a future. At the end of the next generation, and of the next and of the next, when this munificent charity has gone into the culture and recovered manhood of the colored race, Mr. Slater's work will be appreciated at its real and its far-reaching worth.

Then, again, the influences of this splendid beneficence, in stimulating philanthropic enterprise, passing, as it has, into the currency of popular thought as a quickening inspiration; its influence as an impetus to the great workers in the interests of human welfare; its possible influence on recent legislation in providing ampler means for the education of the freedmen, we have no certain means of knowing, but we believe it to have been not inconsiderable; but that its effect has been widespread as an inspiration and a stimulus to others to scheme greater things, and make larger gifts to many forms of philanthropic reform, this we do know, and will know more fully in the time to come.

We say truly then of such men, that death hath no power to put estopment to their life or their influence. We say, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out;" yes, nothing but character, which is all this true man wanted to bear with him, and the influence of

such living we would not take with us if we might. Let it remain with the world, as it must, where the need is so sore and the want so great. The man who hath it in his heart to help this world on a scale so magnificent, takes, if not gold, the better thing, — the knowledge of the uses of gold, — takes the giving heart; takes the nature that will perpetually give; the benevolence that will dispense, like God, forever. Like the "stately ships sailing towards the sunset," such men disappear, but there is an ocean beyond our horizon lines where these heavily ladened argosies continue to sail under an unsetting sun, and will forever more.

And now the earthly end has come; and when it came, you ask me, what? Why, this: Having absorbed and drank in the spirit of the Christ of the gospel story, as he had expressed that spirit in manifold deeds and gifts, these last weeks of sickness discovered to others what had long been a reality unto himself, — a faith which clung to the Cross of the Crucified; a faith which ran to hide in the cleft in the Rock; a faith which united him unto the God of his sainted mother, where he found rest and peace; and with that faith in his heart he girded himself and set his face to go toward his Father's house. And there he has already been welcomed and made at home by loved ones gone in advance; and best of all by Him who found him here a co-worker and fellow-helper, and from whose lips he has heard the words: "Inasmuch as ye have given these cups of cold water unto my lowly poor, inasmuch as ye have done these things unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done them unto Me." With a deep sense of our great and irreparable loss, we yet give joy unto him that he has, as he so longed in his later sickness, reached "home."

And it is fitting that in this place we should speak one final word. It is most fitting that we should bring and lay him down for one brief moment *here*, as we go on our way to the end of our brief journey. Here in this sanctuary of God, which held so much of his love, whose rising tiers of masonry

he watched, who gave to its construction and maintenance so munificently; here, where his seat was almost never vacant; here, where to its services and its success he brought an interest second to that of no other worshipper within its walls; whose love for this church mounted into enthusiasm; here, in this church, which can scarcely be the same to us again without him, it is fitting that we should lay him down for one brief moment; that from hence we may bear him to rest amid the flowers of this opening summer, till the heavens be no more; and here speak our final farewell, where, if *we* were wholly silent, methinks the stones out of these walls would speak, and the beam out of the timber would break its silence.

Looking back over this finished life, and upward along the path of the spirit's ascent, while to us is the sense of great personal loss and bereavement, to him, we know,

> "There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but the suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call Death."

III.

LETTER ESTABLISHING A FUND

FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE FREEDMEN.

To Messrs. Rutherford B. Hayes, of Ohio; Morrison R. Waite, of the District of Columbia; William E. Dodge, of New York; Phillips Brooks, of Massachusetts; Daniel C. Gilman, of Maryland; John A. Stewart, of New York; Alfred H. Colquitt, of Georgia; Morris K. Jesup, of New York; James P. Boyce, of Kentucky; and William A. Slater, of Connecticut.

Gentlemen, — It has pleased God to grant me prosperity in my business, and to put it into my power to apply to charitable uses a sum of money so considerable as to require the counsel of wise men for the administration of it.

It is my desire at this time to appropriate to such uses the sum of one million of dollars ($1,000,000.00); and I hereby invite you to procure a charter of incorporation under which a charitable fund may be held exempt from taxation, and under which you shall organize; and I intend that the corporation, as soon as formed, shall receive this sum in trust to apply the income of it according to the instructions contained in this letter.

The general object which I desire to have exclusively pursued is the uplifting of the lately emancipated population of the Southern States, and their posterity, by conferring on them the blessings of Christian education. The disabilities formerly suffered by these people, and their singular patience and fidelity in the great crisis of the nation, establish a just claim on the sympathy and good-will of humane and patriotic men. I cannot but feel the compassion that is due in view of their prevailing ignorance which exists by no fault of their own.

But it is not only for their own sake, but also for the safety of our common country, in which they have been invested with equal political rights, that I am desirous to aid in providing them with the means of

such education as shall tend to make them good men and good citizens, — education in which the instruction of the mind in the common branches of secular learning shall be associated with training in just notions of duty toward God and man, in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

The means to be used in the prosecution of the general object above described, I leave to the discretion of the corporation; only indicating, as lines of operation adapted to the present condition of things, the training of teachers from among the people requiring to be taught, if, in the opinion of the corporation, by such limited selection the purposes of the trust can be best accomplished; and the encouragement of such institutions as are most effectually useful in promoting this training of teachers.

I am well aware that the work herein proposed is nothing new or untried. And it is no small part of my satisfaction in taking this share in it, that I hereby associate myself with some of the noblest enterprises of charity and humanity, and may hope to encourage the prayers and toils of faithful men and women who have labored and are still laboring in this cause.

I wish the corporation which you are invited to constitute, to consist at no time of more than twelve members, nor of less than nine members for a longer time than may be required for the convenient filling of vacancies, which I desire to be filled by the corporation, and when found practicable, at its next meeting after the vacancy may occur.

I designate as the first President of the corporation the Honorable RUTHERFORD B. HAYES, of Ohio. I desire that it may have power to provide from the income of the fund, among other things, for expenses incurred by members in the fulfilment of this trust, and for the expenses of such officers and agents as it may appoint, and generally to do all such acts as may be necessary for carrying out the purposes of this trust. I desire, if it may be, that the corporation may have full liberty to invest its funds according to its own best discretion, without reference to, or restriction by, any laws or rules, legal or equitable, of any nature, regulating the mode of investment of trust funds; only I wish that neither principal nor income be expended in land or buildings, for any other purpose than that of safe and productive investment for income. And I hereby discharge the corporation, and its individual members, so far as it is in my power so to do, of all responsibility, except for the faithful administration of this trust, according to their own honest understanding and best judgment. In particular, also, I wish to relieve them of any pretended claim on the part of any person, party, sect, institution, or locality, to benefactions from this fund, that may be put forward on

any ground whatever; as I wish every expenditure to be determined solely by the convictions of the corporation itself as to the most useful disposition of its gifts.

I desire that the doings of the corporation each year be printed and sent to each of the State Libraries in the United States, and to the Library of Congress.

In case the capital of the Fund should become impaired, I desire that a part of the income, not greater than one half, be invested, from year to year, until the capital be restored to its original amount.

I purposely leave to the corporation the largest liberty of making such changes in the methods of applying the income of the Fund as shall seem from time to time best adapted to accomplish the general object herein defined. But being warned by the history of such endowments that they sometimes tend to discourage rather than promote effort and self-reliance on the part of beneficiaries; or to inure to the advancement of learning instead of the dissemination of it; or to become a convenience to the rich instead of a help to those who need help, — I solemnly charge my Trustees to use their best wisdom in preventing any such defeat of the spirit of this trust; so that my gift may continue to future generations to be a blessing to the poor.

If at any time after the lapse of thirty-three years from the date of this foundation, it shall appear to the judgment of three fourths of the members of this corporation that, by reason of a change in social conditions, or by reason of adequate and equitable public provision for education, or by any other sufficient reason, there is no further serious need of this Fund in the form in which it is at first instituted, I authorize the corporation to apply the capital of the Fund to the establishment of foundations subsidiary to then already existing institutions of higher education, in such wise as to make the educational advantages of such institutions more freely accessible to poor students of the colored race.

It is my wish that this trust be administered in no partisan, sectional, or sectarian spirit, but in the interest of a generous patriotism and an enlightened Christian faith; and that the corporation about to be formed, may continue to be constituted of men distinguished either by honorable success in business, or by services to literature, education, religion, or the state.

I am encouraged to the execution in this charitable foundation of a long-cherished purpose, by the eminent wisdom and success that has marked the conduct of the Peabody Education Fund in a field of operation not remote from that contemplated by this trust. I shall commit it to your hands, deeply conscious how insufficient is our best forecast to

provide for the future that is known only to God; but humbly hoping that the administration of it may be so guided by divine wisdom as to be, in its turn, an encouragement to philanthropic enterprise on the part of others, and an enduring means of good to our beloved country and to our fellow-men.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your friend and fellow-citizen,

JOHN F. SLATER.

NORWICH, CONN., March 4, 1882.

IV.

CHARTER FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

APPROVED APRIL 28, 1882.

An Act to Incorporate the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund.

Whereas, Messrs. RUTHERFORD B. HAYES, of Ohio, MORRISON R. WAITE, of the District of Columbia, WILLIAM E. DODGE, of New York, PHILLIPS BROOKS, of Massachusetts, DANIEL C. GILMAN, of Maryland, JOHN A. STEWART, of New York, ALFRED H. COLQUITT, of Georgia, MORRIS K. JESUP, of New York, JAMES P. BOYCE, of Kentucky, and WILLIAM A. SLATER, of Connecticut, have, by their memorial, represented to the Senate and Assembly of this State that a letter has been received by them from JOHN F. SLATER, of Norwich, in the State of Connecticut, of which the following is a copy: —

[Here the letter printed on the preceding pages of this pamphlet is inserted.]

And whereas, said memorialists have further represented that they are ready to accept said trust and receive and administer said fund, provided a charter of incorporation is granted by this State, as indicated in said letter;

Now, therefore, for the purpose of giving full effect to the charitable intentions declared in said letter;

The people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

SECT. 1. Rutherford B. Hayes, Morrison R. Waite, William E. Dodge, Phillips Brooks, Daniel C. Gilman, John A. Stewart, Alfred H. Colquitt, Morris K. Jesup, James P. Boyce, and William A. Slater are hereby created a body politic and corporate by the name of THE TRUSTEES OF THE JOHN F. SLATER FUND, and by that name shall

have perpetual succession; said original corporators electing their associates and successors, from time to time, so that the whole number of corporators may be kept at not less than nine nor more than twelve.

Said corporation may hold and manage, invest and re-invest, all property which may be given or transferred to it for the charitable purposes indicated in said letter, and shall, in so doing, and in appropriating the income accruing therefrom, conform to, and be governed by, the directions in said letter contained; and such property and all investments and re-investments thereof, excepting real estate, shall, while owned by said corporation and held for the purposes of said trust, be exempt from taxation of any and every nature.

SECT. 2. Rutherford B. Hayes, of Ohio, shall be the first President of the corporation, and it may elect such other officers and hold such meetings, whether within or without this State, from time to time, as its by-laws may authorize or prescribe.

SECT. 3. Said corporation shall annually file with the Librarian of this State a printed report of its doings during the preceding year.

SECT. 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

V.

ACTION OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the thanks of Congress be, and they hereby are, presented to JOHN F. SLATER, of Connecticut, for his great beneficence in giving the large sum of one million dollars for the purpose of "uplifting the lately emancipated population of the Southern States and their posterity, by conferring on them the blessings of Christian education."

SECT. 2. That it shall be the duty of the President to cause a gold medal to be struck, with suitable devices and inscriptions, which, together with a copy of this resolution, shall be presented to Mr. SLATER in the name of the people of the United States.

Approved Feb. 5, 1883.

VI.

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT HAYES,

AT A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE JOHN F. SLATER FUND.

GENTLEMEN: Our first duty at this the fifth meeting of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen is devolved upon us by the death, since our last meeting, of the Founder of this Trust.

John F. Slater died early Wednesday morning, the 7th of May last, at his home in Norwich, Connecticut, at the age of sixty-nine. He had suffered severely from chronic complaints for several months, and his death was not a surprise to his family or intimate friends.

Two of the members of this Board of Trustees, Mr. Morris K. Jesup and myself, had the melancholy privilege of representing the Board at the impressive funeral services of Mr. Slater at his home, at the Congregational Church, and at the Cemetery in Norwich, on the Saturday following his death.

When he last met this Board his healthful appearance and general vigor gave promise of a long and active life. It was with great confidence that we then expressed to him our conviction that his wise and generous gift for the education of the emancipated people of the South and their posterity was made at a period of his life when he might reasonably hope to observe during many years its beneficent influence. But in the providence of God it has been otherwise ordered, and the life which we fondly wished would last long enough to yield to him the satisfaction of seeing the results of his patriotic forecast, has been brought to a close.

He had a widely extended and well-earned reputation for ability, energy, integrity, and success as a manufacturer and as a man of affairs. He was a philanthropist, a patriot, a good citizen, and a good neighbor. He was a member of the Park Congregational Society in Norwich for many years, and was warmly and strongly attached to the denomination of his choice. His church relations did not limit his sympathies nor narrow his views of duty. In his letter establishing this Trust is the following clause: —

"The general object which I desire to have exclusively pursued, is the uplifting of the lately emancipated population of the Southern States, and their posterity, by conferring on them the blessings of Christian education."

When asked the precise meaning of the phrase "Christian education," he replied that "the phrase Christian education is to be taken in the largest and most general sense, — that, in the sense which he intended, the common-school teaching of Massachusetts and Connecticut was Christian education; that it is leavened with a predominant and salutary Christian influence; that there was no need of limiting the gifts of the Fund to denominational institutions; that if the Trustees should be satisfied that at a certain State institution their beneficiaries would be surrounded by wholesome influences such as would tend to make good Christian citizens of them, there is nothing in the use of the phrase referred to to hinder their sending pupils to it."

I forbear to attempt to give a full sketch of Mr. Slater. Enough has perhaps been said to bring to your attention the great loss which this Trust has sustained in the death of its founder, and the propriety of placing on our records, and giving to the public, a worthy and elaborate notice of his life, character, and good deeds.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

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